



Building Capacity for Oregon's Air Toxics Program

Annette Liebe, Manager Air Quality Planning, Oregon DEQ

- Oregon is developing a new state air toxics program
- Need to generate interest and support through
 - Scientific information
 - Community involvement
 - Partnerships

NEW PROGRAM

•Two years ago we got recommendations from an advisory committee to proceed with a state-specific air toxics program to fill gaps in the federal program. We are now working on the rule concepts for the new program with a second advisory committee, and hope to begin implementation after program adoption in late 2002. It will be community-based.

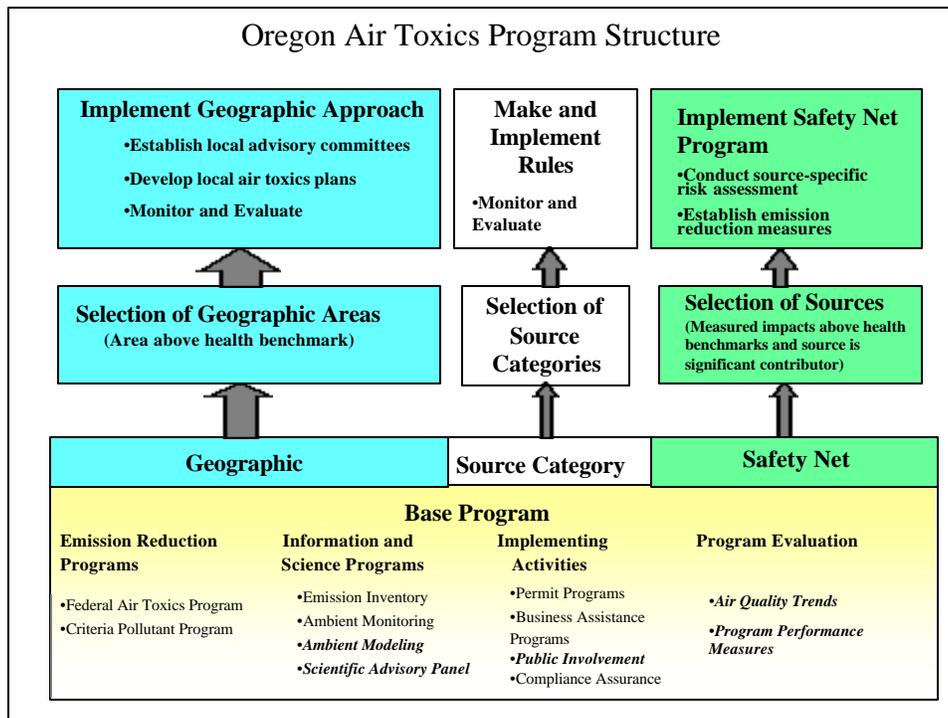
FUNDING

•Our program is currently grant-supported and we will be looking for long-term funding. To gain long-term funding, we need to generate interest and support statewide. This interest and support can only come with effective communications of sound scientific information, involving stakeholders and communities, and partnering with other agencies and institutions, particularly those working in public health. We have had to reconnect with the health agencies and universities to build credibility in our data and approach to protecting public health.

•Internally, we shifted two people from Title V work to Air Toxics Program Development.

•Building a new toxics program is an iterative process: information followed by program development, more information directing further program development and support. No legislative mandate causes slower progress and less funding.

•Environmental and Citizen groups are now shifting more attention to air toxics. Previous concerns have centered around natural resource issues in our state. (Our Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxin (PBT) initiative is a common ground for both natural resources and human health concerns.)



OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD CAPACITY

The Best Science:

- We need the best information on what is in the air so we have a clear and credible foundation for moving ahead on geographically-based emission reduction planning. We seek to provide data to the public in an easily accessible and understandable format and use effective risk communication to increase awareness of air toxics problems.

Health-related Benchmarks:

- We will be using an expert Science Advisory Panel to develop health-based ambient air toxics benchmarks to be used in measuring problems and driving the program.

Community Involvement:

- We have just begun to work with communities to understand their concerns and move forward in cooperation to address air toxics problems.
- We have conducted two advisory committees on air toxics, and need to progress towards wider community involvement. Advisory committee members are extremely valuable stakeholders who communicate with their colleagues and members in environmental justice, public interest, industry sectors, public health, small business and local government.
- While we want the community to lead, we also need to build accountability measures into the program to ensure progress and some level of consistency statewide. Our current advisory committee has been debating how we can recognize regional variability and allow communities flexibility to reduce air toxics risk, while still maintaining consistent risk reduction goals and equal protection of public health statewide.



Oregon's Air Toxics Program

- Scientific Information
 - Monitoring
 - Modeling
 - Emission Inventory

MONITORING

- So far, most of our stakeholders have placed the highest value on monitoring. Because modeling is more cost effective, we are hoping that monitor to model comparisons will boost confidence in modeling as a way to assess air toxics.
- Monitoring is complex and costly (analysis and equipment)
- The most credible approach is to monitor a variety of pollutants, using various methods, and to use standard monitoring methods - ones that are consistent with methods used in other states and by EPA.
- One longer term monitor is located in Portland, one in Eugene. When we went through the monitor siting process in Portland, we held meetings in two neighborhoods to discuss preliminary monitoring data and get input about monitor siting concerns. Both neighborhoods wanted the long term monitor.

MODELING

- DEQ communicated NATA information statewide to build support for our toxics program. There is a perception of few problems in our state. In reality, NATA concentration estimates showed 6 pollutants more than 10 times above benchmarks and 16 above benchmarks statewide. We plan to communicate NATA exposure information when it comes out.
- We need additional modeling capacity to develop emission reduction plans, site monitors and evaluate facility dispersion modeling.

EMISSION INVENTORY

- We are currently updating our air toxics emission inventory with 1999 data. This effort is grant funded. We are working on an internal user interface and plan to add an interface for members of the public.



Oregon's Air Toxics Program

- Benchmarks and the Science Advisory Panel
 - Need to staff a 5 to 7 person volunteer panel of experts
 - Science Advisory Panel will provide expertise and second opinions on risk-based issues

BENCHMARKS

- Benchmarks will be based on one in a million excess cancer risk or a hazard quotient of one for non-carcinogens. They are not standards, but program triggers and risk reduction goals.
- Choosing one in a million excess cancer risk and a hazard quotient of one is a public policy rather than a scientific decision. Ambient air concentrations reflecting these harm levels will be based on the best available information.
- We hope to have benchmarks in place for the 30 highest priority air toxics in 2003.

SAP

- DEQ will first need to find volunteer SAP members and hire staff to support its work.
- SAP membership: Toxicology, Environmental Science, Risk Assessment, Epidemiology/Biostatistics, Medicine, Air Pollution Modeling, Monitoring and Meteorology
- We are trying to limit the role and workload of the SAP. No policy, just science.
- We also need to ensure an effective relationship between the DEQ, SAP, and our Commission.



Oregon's Air Toxics Program

- Connecting with Communities
 - Community-based strategies have been successful for criteria pollutants
 - Just beginning dialog with communities on toxics issues
 - Community interest is critical to long-term program funding

CRITERIA POLLUTANT SUCCESSES

- Criteria pollutant success stories: woodstoves, open burning, ozone reduction.
- Particulate pollution reduction efforts in several parts of our state have been based on successful local initiatives to change people's wood-burning and open burning behaviors. In these areas we have an effective communications network with local health officials, local government, interest groups and citizens.

TRANSFER TO AIR TOXICS

- We hope to utilize this network to address air toxics in smaller cities. We need to build the same kind of connections in more urban areas to address the highest concentrations of air toxics.
- We need to understand how to communicate about air toxics within the larger framework of community environmental health concerns, such as lead, asthma triggers, indoor air quality, fish consumption, etc. We plan to receive assistance in this area from health officials.
- We are interested in locating grant funding that can flow directly through to communities and non-profits to build capacity for local assessments and emission reduction planning.

CONCLUSION

- Because Oregon has a new program, we are looking to the participants of this workshop for guidance and ideas on the most effective ways to engage a community in reducing its risk from air toxics.